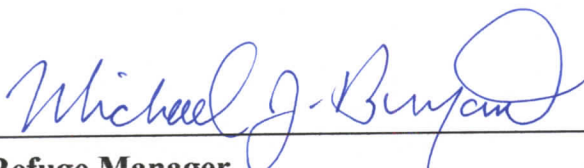


# Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge Complex

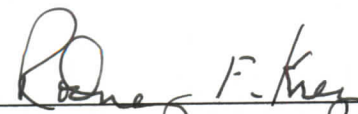
LAKE ANDES NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
KARL MUNDT NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
LAKE ANDES WETLAND MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## 2000 ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT

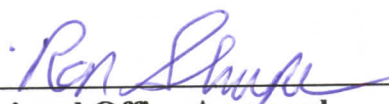
### REVIEW AND APPROVALS

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Refuge Manager

1/13/05  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Refuge Supervisor

1/19/05  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Office Approval

1/20/05  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge  
Complex**

**Lake Andes, South Dakota**

**Annual Narrative Report**

**Calendar Year 2000**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Department of the Interior**

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# *Lake Andes NWR Complex*

## INTRODUCTIONS

### *Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge*

Lake Andes, a 4,700 acre meandered lake, whose water level depends entirely upon annual runoff, lies in the south central portion of Charles Mix County, South Dakota. The lake, historically used as a campsite by Sioux hunting parties pursuing migrant buffalo herds and waterfowl flocks, was actually named after a French trader whose nickname was Andy. "Andy's Lake" was given its present title following the establishment of a town and post office in 1900.

The Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1936 by a Presidential Executive Order that authorized the purchase of 365 acres of land at Owens Bay. Subsequent land purchases have been made on a continuing basis, to form the 832 acre Owens Bay Unit.

In 1939, the largest single easement ever granted by the state of South Dakota conveyed to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service the right to flood the 4700 acre Lake Andes meandered lake bed and maintain a closed Refuge for migratory birds and other wildlife.

Two dikes separate Lake Andes into three management units; however, the lack of a permanent water supply allows very little water level manipulation. The Owens Bay marsh (240 ac.), fed by natural runoff and the waters from a free-flowing artesian well, is managed using a system of periodic water level draw downs to produce optimum waterfowl brood rearing conditions, plus the production of natural waterfowl food.

Lake Andes is infamously known for a January 1973 outbreak of Duck Virus Enteritis which killed 40,000 ducks and geese using the open water of Owens Bay. This unfortunate die-off prompted drastic changes in the Refuge's management, including the elimination of wintering waterfowl (using short periods of well shutdown and pyrotechnics) during the winter months and the elimination of food crops previously grown for the wintering flocks of ducks and geese. Nearly 300 acres of cropland were re-seeded to native grass nesting cover and the area is now managed primarily for the production of waterfowl and various species of water birds. A multitude of birds and animals, indigenous and introduced to the prairie ecosystem, also utilize the Refuge.

## ***Karl Mundt National Wildlife Refuge***

**The Karl E. Mundt National Wildlife Refuge was purchased by the National Wildlife Federation in 1974. The \$250,000 purchase price was provided by the Seven-Eleven Food Stores (a division of the Southland Corporation) and was collected through a national "Save an Eagle" campaign. On December 19, 1974, in a ceremony at the National Wildlife Federation Headquarters, Washington, D.C., the administration of this refuge was turned over to the Fish and Wildlife Service.**

**Two tracts of fee title land were purchased from John and Mabel Cassidy and totaled 780 acres. The "North Unit" contains 580 acres and lies entirely within the state of South Dakota. The "South Unit" consists of 200 acres, 20 of which are in Nebraska.**

**Separating the North and South Units is a 305 acre parcel owned by the Will Jonas estate. This tract is protected by a perpetual easement which states that the landowners "...will cooperate in the maintenance of the aforesaid lands as a roosting and nesting grounds for eagles by not changing existing timber, grasses, structures, or appurtenances...". The preservation of the mature cottonwoods, which currently provide eagle roosting habitat was the actual intent of the easement.**

**Another 300 acre tract (formerly owned by the G. R. Kirwan estate and recently purchased by Bill Jonas) lies between the Jonas property and the North Unit. Both the Jonas and Kirwan tracts have been identified as potential fee title purchases under the LWCF acquisition program.**

**The refuge is located 1½ miles down river from Fort Randall Dam. The water releases for hydroelectric generation create an open water area directly below the dam. The open water, plus an abundant supply of various fish species, provides a winter feeding area for the bald eagles. Waterfowl flocks, also attracted to the open water, provide a supplemental food source for the eagles.**

## ***Lake Andes Wetland Management District***

**The Lake Andes WMD is located in the extreme southwestern portion of the Prairie Pothole Region. The southern location results in the area having milder winters than the remainder of the eastern Dakotas and Minnesota; however, summers are longer and warmer. Annual evaporation can amount to 36 inches, while the rainfall varies from 17 inches to 24 inches across the District. These conditions result in more years of marginal and poor wetland conditions in comparison to areas farther north and east.**

**Three vegetative zones are found across the District. The true or tall grass prairie zone encompasses the four eastern counties with the dominant native grasses being big bluestem, Indian grass, switch grass, and other warm-season grasses. Very little native prairie remains in this area since it contains highly fertile soils and adequate rainfall conducive to maximized agri-business. Land use is extremely heavy and most private wetlands have been drained.**

**The tall grass/mixed prairie transition zone covers the central portion of the District. The dominant native grasses in this area are western wheatgrass, big bluestem, and porcupine grass. Lower annual precipitation limits row crops to some extent and land use is more diversified between small grains, row crops, hayland, and pasture. Shelter belts, farmsteads, and feedlot areas are also more common. Wetlands and associated vegetative cover on private land supports excellent populations of wildlife. The vast majority of the District's WPAs are located within this zone. Waterfowl and other wildlife populations are highest within this zone as compared to other zones.**

**The western portion of the District falls within the mixed grass prairie zone, with dominant native grasses being western wheatgrass, needle and thread, and blue grama. Annual rainfall averages 17 inches; therefore, small grain crops are predominant on agricultural lands. Native prairie, pastures, and hayland comprise a larger percentage of the land use than in the two zones to the east. Even though land use is less intense, the wetlands are less numerous and upland vegetation is shorter due to the drier climate. Wildlife populations reach good numbers in scattered areas, but overall this area is less productive than the transition zone.**

## A. HIGHLIGHTS

### 7. Fire Management

#### *February*

Several mowed firebreaks were completed for upcoming prescribed fire season!

#### *May*

Lake Andes Complex has the biggest prescribed fire season in the history of the Complex! Fire Crews from six other refuges and WMD's assist with prescribed fire at Lake Andes!

### 12. Partners for Wildlife (private lands) or Partnerships OFF Service Lands

#### *March*

Dry weather allows project construction in March!

#### *April*

New streamlined system of program accomplishments reporting requires far less time to complete!

### 22. Other

#### *May*

A boy, Kai Angelo, was born to Sylvia and Charlie Pelizza on May 15, 2000.

A girl, Lillith Claire, was born to Dorothy and Jacques Duquette. Jacques is a seasonal at the refuge.

## **B. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS**

### ***January***

High 58 ° F

Low 2 ° F

Precipitation - 0 inches

The warm weather continued thru mid January with the high reached on January 1. Temperatures ranged in the 40s and 50s through the middle of the month. By the end of the month, temperatures were in the 20s and 30s. The low was recorded on January 4 and 5. Precipitation was once again nonexistent in both rainfall and snowfall. A small snow storm hit on January 28 leaving only one inch on the ground; most of which melted by the next day.

### ***February***

High 77° F

Low 1° F

Precipitation 0.83 inches

Unusual weather continued into February. The month began with highs in the 30°s and continued to be within this range until the end of the month when the high of 77°F was recorded on February 22. The high for the month has not gone below 0°F this entire winter! This month's low was recorded on February 11 and 12. Snowfall eluded once again with only a trace recorded on February 13, 17, and 18. Precipitation was recorded on February 18, 24, and 25. The ice disappeared from the lake on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

### ***March***

High 78 ° F

Low 12 ° F

Precipitation 0.98 inches

Spring seems to be arriving early with the weather we have been having. The average high temperature for the month was 55.95°F with the high recorded on March 8. The average low temperature was 28.45°F with the low recorded on March 16. No snowfall was recorded. What little rain was received fell in four short showers. There has been very little moisture this entire winter causing several counties to incorporate burning bans.

***April***

High 82° F

Low 21° F

Precipitation 1.51 inches

Precipitation! A few showers and one snow storm were experienced this month. No snow accumulation, but the few tenths of moisture was is really needed at this time. Burn bans were off and on throughout the Complex. The month started in the high 50°s and fluctuated with a high of 32° recorded during the middle of the month. The high of 82° was recorded on April 23. The month ended in the 70°s. The low was recorded on April 4 and 5.

***May***

High 89 ° F on May 6th

Low 35 ° F on May 13th

Precipitation 4.11 inches

***June***

High 102 ° F

Low 42 ° F

Precipitation 1.29 inches

Dry, hot weather continued into June. The high was recorded on June 9 with the low recorded on June 5. The average high was 80.63 ° F. The average low was 54.36 ° F. Precipitation received is well below the evaporation loss. A total of 7.77 inches of precipitation was lost during June.

***July***

High 102° F

Low 49° F

Precipitation 0.41 inches

July was a hot and humid month! 90° F plus weather was experienced throughout the month with three days reaching 100° F and above. The high was recorded on July 8. Precipitation continues to elude us. A mere 0.41 of an inch was recorded for the month. Average temperatures for July were: average high was 90.3° F; average low was 63.9° F.

***August***

High 107° F

Low 52° F

Precipitation 1.67 inches

Hot and dry describes the month of August. Only one “good” rain shower occurred on August 8<sup>th</sup> with an accumulation of 1.12 inches. Temperatures for most of the month were in the 90°s and 100°s. The high was recorded on August 15. Average lows ranged in the 60°s with the low recorded on two days, August 18 and 19. Wetlands have been severely impacted with no precipitation this past winter, spring, and summer.

***September***

High 98° F

Low 33° F

Precipitation 0.46 inches

Another dry month with high temperatures ranging from 98°F, reached on September 10 and 18, to 51°F on September 25. The average high was 80.73°F. The low for the month was recorded on September 26. The average low was 50.86°F.

***October***

High 88° F

Low 18° F

Precipitation 1.69 inches

October began with warm weather, 88°F on October 1 and 20, but it didn't last long. Cooler temperatures were recorded at the end of the month. The minimum temperature of 18°F was recorded on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. The first significant accumulation of rain fall for the year was recorded in October. Several small rain showers throughout the month added to the total recorded.

***November***

High 72° F on November 1st

Low 5° F on November 17<sup>th</sup> and 18th

Total Precipitation 3.4 inches

***December***

High 47° F

Low 13° F

Precipitation .35 inches

December brought unusually cold temperatures and strong winds. The highest temperature occurred on the 8th of December with the lowest occurring on Christmas eve and Christmas day. Eight inches of snow fell on the 11<sup>th</sup> with a total of 9.62 inches for the month.

## **C. LAND ACQUISITION**

### **2. Easements**

#### ***January***

With SROS Hicks leaving the station, land acquisition efforts will slow. The Huron WAO has agreed to process any offers we have that are within the red and yellow zones of the Thunderstorm map. Four were sent to their office on January 31. These include offers listed in 1999.

New offers during the month of January totaled six. One rejection letter for an 1999 offer was written.

#### ***February***

ROS Peterson met with Reno Shaft of Ultimate Outdoor Adventures to offer advice on revitalization of their grasslands under easement. The managers indicated they want their land to look like the WPAs bordering their property in Charles Mix and Douglas Counties. Several thousand acres are currently protected with grass and wet easements. The location of this property is in the heart of the best habitat found in the Lake Andes WMD. The managers are relatively new and have a strong desire to maximize the wildlife resources on the lands they manage by incorporating management strategies used by FWS.

Four new easement offers were received during the month. Our backlog now stands at nineteen.

#### ***April***

A letter was written to nineteen landowners interested in the wetland and grassland easement programs, letting them know that no action would occur on their offer until later this summer due to our personnel shortage.

#### ***June***

Easement information was sent to Brule County landowner, John Sharping.

#### ***October***

PLS Spawn met with Charles Mix County landowner, Tom Stoker, to discuss possibilities for his land. Considerable time was spent discussing FWS easements as his land has good potential for our programs.

## **D. PLANNING**

### **5. Research and Investigations**

#### ***February***

ROS Peterson has provided technical and planning assistance to Diane Larson of USGS, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center. Diane is researching the effects of bio-control and habitat management strategies used by managers for the Service and there relationship to Canada thistle. Jay will be writing two prescribed burn plans within her study areas in 2000.

### **6. Other**

#### ***February***

ROS Peterson met with the personnel from the US Corps of Engineers at the Fort Randall Dam to discuss planning a bald eagle viewing and picnic area on COE lands below the Dam. An area currently used by the public for eagle viewing and fishing is proposed to be further developed with a major focus on bald eagles and Lewis and Clark's passage through the area. The project proposal is widely accepted from staff at the Fort Randall and will be a well used addition to the area.

## **E. ADMINISTRATION**

### **1. Personnel**

**Table I. Staff and Changes for 2000**

	<b>Permanent</b>		
Sylvia Pelizza	Refuge Manager	GS 13	Transferred 12/3/00
Steve Hicks	Asst. Refuge Manager (Supv)	GS 11	Transferred 1/16/00
Jay Peterson	Asst. Refuge Manager	GS 9	Transferred 10/22/00
Charles Pelizza	Wildlife Biologist	GS 12	Transferred 12/3/00
Mark Heisinger	Asst. Refuge Manager	GS 12	EOD 10/8/00
Diane Von Eschen	Admin Support Asst	GS 8	
Eugene Slaba	Maintenance Worker (Leader)	WG 9	
Steven Spawn	Biological Science Tech	GS 7	
	<b>Career Seasonal</b>		
John Eldridge	Maintenance Worker	WG 7	
	<b>Temporary</b>		
Jeff Dvorak	Biological Science Tech	GS 4	
Jacques Duquette	Biological Science Tech	GS4	
Jeremy Eldridge	Biological Science Aid	GS 3	
Phil Rezac	Biological Science Aid	GS 3	
Jonathan Beck	Biological Science Tech	GS 3	EOD 5/21-8/12/00
Erik Merriman	Biological Science Tech	GS 3	EOD 6/18-8/12/00
Laura McHale	SCEP Student Trainee	GS 5	Transferred 5/7/00

*Staff Photos:*



*Sylvia Pelizza*



*Charlie Pelizza*



*Diane Von Eschen*



*Steve Hicks*



*Jay Peterson*



*Steve Spawn*



*Gene Slaba*



*John Eldridge*



***Maintenance Crew (left to right):***

***Jeremy Eldridge, Phil Rezac, John Eldridge, Jacques Duquette and Jeff Dvorak***

***January***

Steve Hicks transferred to Bear River MBR effective January 16, 2000. A farewell party for Steve and Jennifer was held on January 8th.

Other staff members will be taking over some of the duties Steve had while we wait for a replacement. PLS Spawn will continue with habitat management in Aurora and Brule counties and ROS Peterson will take on the full load of easement enforcement responsibilities. RM Pelizza remains responsible for the remainder of the duties.

***February***

Position descriptions were reviewed and updated for the three ROS positions on station: GS-12, GS-11, GS-9.

### ***May***

BioTech Eldridge attended S-130 and S-190 in Huron during the week of May 22-May 26.

ROS Peterson, PLS Spawn and AB Pelizza attended B-3 Aviation Training in Huron on May 31.

On May 31, Bio Tech Duquette attended ATV training on site.

### ***June***

ROS Peterson is acting Project Leader while Project Leader Pelizza is on maternity leave.

### ***August***

ROS Peterson completed performance appraisals for maintenance personnel.  
Mark Heisinger became a member of the staff at Lake Andes. He will be taking care of part of the WMD.

### ***September***

ROS Peterson presented a retirement gift to Maury Wright at his retirement party in Aberdeen, SD.

### ***October***

ROS Peterson left this station to fill the assistant manager position at Lacreek NWR effective October 17th. He was honored with a potluck luncheon by the staff.  
This is the second assistant manager to leave this year, with no promise of refilling either position any time soon.

### ***November***

Performance plans were completed for the entire staff.

Steve and Elizabeth Spawn had a baby girl, Abigail Marie, on Thanksgiving Day, the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### ***December***

On December 2nd, a farewell party was held for Refuge Manager Sylvia and Area Biologist Charlie Pelizza. They are leaving South Dakota for sunny "Sonny" Bono Salton Sea Refuge in California. This brings the score to 5 transferring out and 1 transferring in within the last 18 months. What staff remains is attempting to hold down the fort until reinforcements arrive.

## **3. Other Manpower Programs**

### ***September***

Two local individuals completed 152 hours of court ordered community service for the Refuge. Projects completed were painting of the old kiosk, pulling weeds along the refuge nature trail, and banding waterfowl.

#### 4. Volunteer Program

##### *January*

Jacques Duquette volunteered four hours to help staff the booth at the Mid-Winter Fair on January 26<sup>th</sup>.

##### *July*

Volunteer Jarod Sterling was recognized with a certificate and given volunteer items for his many hours of service to the refuge.

#### 5. Funding

**Table II. Funding for FY2000**

Cost Structure/Year	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
<i>1121 - Private Lands</i>	\$44,000	\$45,000	\$39,500	\$38,000	\$34,000
<i>1130 - Amphibian Survey</i>	\$2,000				
<i>1231- Migratory Bird</i>	\$19,010	\$21,000	\$14,000	\$3,500	\$4,500
<i>1234 Flushing Bar Project</i>			\$2,500		
<i>1261 - Operations</i>	\$357,400	\$495,600	\$503,319	\$434,961	\$430,950
<i>1261-6MSR Ecosystem</i>			\$5,000	\$0	\$27,000
<i>1261- Challenge Cost Share</i>		\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,500	
<i>1261- Special Projects</i>	\$34,700	\$1,725	\$10,400		
<i>1262 - Maintenance</i>	\$50,000	\$7,000	\$13,000	\$22,000	\$10,000
<i>1262 - MMS</i>	\$82,000			\$38,700	\$10,000
<i>2957 - Flood Money</i>	\$115,683	\$150,467	\$182,502	\$162,000	
<i>6860 - Expenses for Sales</i>	\$14,000	\$15,400	\$15,400	\$10,000	\$10,000
<i>8610 - Quarters</i>	\$3,884	\$3,900	\$3,700	\$4,080	\$5,300
<i>9120/9251 - Fire</i>	\$50,800	\$2,100	\$8,500	\$2,000	\$1,500
<i>9263 - Prescribed Burns</i>	\$29,777	\$34,670	\$3,849		
<i>9400 - National Fish Week</i>			\$425		
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$803,254</i>	<i>\$778,862</i>	<i>\$804,095</i>	<i>\$717,741</i>	<i>\$533,250</i>

**Noteworthy expenditures for FY2000:**

Eagle Flights and Swan Survey	1231-60MB	\$ 3,000
Banding	1231-60MB	\$ 3,500
SCEP Student & Support	1231-60MB	\$11,800
BAOW Grant	1261-0000	\$ 2,000
Waterfowl Trunk	1261-0000	\$ 2,500
Contaminant Study	1261-0000	\$28,000
Parking Lot	1261-D6LA	\$20,000
Lawn Mower & Side Mount Mower	1261-B6LA	\$23,000
Stalk Chopper	1262-B6LA	\$12,000
Pickup	1262-B6LA	\$27,000
New Model 52	9251-0000	\$46,000
Gravel - South& North Dikes	2957-0000	\$18,000
Fencing, Signs, Wire, Posts, Etc.	2957-0000	\$21,000
Roof Repair	2957-0000	\$ 3,000
Chemical	1261-0000	\$20,000
Biologists Budget	1261-0000	\$74,000
Observation Binoculars	1262-0000	\$ 4,668
Dakota Air - aerial spraying	1261-0000	\$ 2,850
Prescribed Burn Costs	9263-0000	\$29,777

***February***

We finally received a budget for FY2000. Unfortunately, we were cut by over \$100,000 to fill positions elsewhere in South Dakota. In addition, we did not receive enough funding to pay the few remaining permanent personnel on board! This situation is hopefully being rectified.

***April***

RM Pelizza completed the fire budget for FY 2001

RONs was updated and completed.

**6. Safety*****January***

PLS Spawn reported being bit by a dog while contacting a private landowner in Tripp County. First aid measures were taken and no other medical attention was necessary. An electronic SMIS Report was completed by Admin Asst Von Eschen.

***February***

The air boat was equipped with rescue equipment in preparation for any emergency that may arise when the ice becomes thin.

### ***March***

Two videos were viewed this month by available personnel. One was entitled "Chemical Safety" and the other, a humorous one, entitled "Give Me Safety or Get Me Otta Here".

Accident report forms were completed and sent to Workers Comp for Gene Slaba, who hurt his back while moving office furniture.

Staff discussed the safety hazard of non-water proof outlets and garage door covers in the new shop wash bay. The contractor was not required to install waterproof ones, so we will be replacing them ourselves.

### ***September***

Safety Officer Jim Behrmann conducted a Safety Inspection at the Karl Mundt NWR on September 11<sup>th</sup>. The following day, September 12<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Behrmann visited the Lake Andes NWR. Minor infractions were found at each site. Most were fixed within the following week.

## **7. Technical Assistance**

### ***January***

RM Pelizza completed a Challenge Grant Agreement for the 2000 Becoming An Outdoors Woman Workshop as well as a Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation application.

### ***June***

ROS Peterson helped collect and distribute leafy spurge bio-control agents to two private landowners, (Brule and Yankton Counties) and one Conservation Officer in Bon Homme County.

## **8. Other**

### ***January***

RM Pelizza completed the computer version of Ethics training.

RM Pelizza "attended" a conference call on January 6 regarding position reviews.

RM Pelizza, ROS Peterson, and PLS Spawn attended the WMD meeting in Fargo from January 19-21.

### ***February***

ROS Peterson attended a grant writing course in Huron on February 16 and 17.

### ***March***

RM Pelizza attended the Coordination and Project Leader's meeting in Chamberlain on March 8.

The station's Spill Prevention and Countermeasure Plan was reviewed and comments sent to Jim Behrmann in the Regional Safety Office.

RM Pelizza began coordinating logistics for the upcoming 2000 Roster Clinics.

The GAO survey on personal water craft and snowmobiles for Lake Andes and Karl Mundt were completed.

#### *May*

PL Pelizza completed a Section 7, Compatibility Determination, and Evaluation Checklist for the Lake Andes Pipeline Project for Lorene Trujillo, Realty Management.

MMS updates were completed and forwarded to the RO.

#### *June*

ROS Peterson attended a wind power tour in Iowa looking at the impact wind generation has on the landscape. The tour was very informative however, the wind towers (54), were located in nearly 100% agricultural land so the comparison to lands we manage in South Dakota was very different. Several energy companies have indicated a desire to expand into the State, primarily in the northeast.

#### *July*

PLS Spawn attended the Motorboat Operator's Certification Course in Pierre.

#### *August*

Refuge Supervisor Maury Wright visited the refuge on August 2 and 3 to discuss personnel issues and refuge management as well as say good-bye. We wish him well in his retirement.

Maintenance Work Leader Gene Slaba attended the annual Maintenance Workshop in Spearfish, SD on August 21-25.

PL Pelizza and AB Pelizza provided assistance to Archaeologists Galen Burgett and Rhoda Lewis at the Lacreek NWR archaeological site on August 24-25. This was a new site discovered when the wetland unit was dewatered.

#### *September*

Refuge Supervisor Ron Shupe visited the refuge on September 7 to introduce himself to the staff and address station needs.

PL Pelizza participated in the 2000 Becoming An Outdoors Woman Workshop held in Custer, SD on September 15-17. PL Pelizza is both a committee member as well as an instructor for two courses held during the three day event. AB Pelizza also participated as an instructor for three courses.

### ***October***

WM Heisinger attended and Inservice planning meeting at Marana Oct 3-5.

PL Pelizza attended Victim Witness Training in Washington, D.C. on October 2-5. PL Pelizza will be the Department of the Interior's Representative for the Midwest states.

Robert O'Brian from the Federal Highway Administration visited the refuge on October 10 to discuss our parking lots and access roads.

PL Pelizza attended the Region 6 Project Leader's meeting and Compatibility Training session in Denver, CO on October 30-November 3.

RCAR and MMS Accomplishment Report and the Volunteer Report were completed and submitted during the month.

### ***November***

PL Pelizza and WM Heisinger attended compatibility training in Denver in conjunction with the Project Leaders Meeting.

PL Pelizza and AB Pelizza left for a ten day house hunting trip to California on Nov 11.

### ***December***

ASA Von Eschen attended the required procurement training in Bismarck December 4-5.

## **F. HABITAT MANAGEMENT**

### **1. General**

#### ***January***

PLS Spawn has assumed habitat management duties for Brule and Aurora Counties for the upcoming field season due to the departure of ROS Hicks. Spawn spent considerable time in the WPA files as well as in discussions with ROS Peterson and RM Pelizza concerning management of WPAs. Habitat assessments have been done on many of the areas this winter in preparation for the upcoming field season.

#### ***August***

ROS Peterson conducted numerous WPA inspections to visualize the effects of CY2000 management strategies.

### **2. Wetlands**

#### ***March***

Five boards were pulled out of the Owen's Bay outlet structure. The boards were not holding any water in the bay. They were pulled to prevent spring rains from flooding parts of two units to be burned this spring.

#### ***April***

The station Water Management Plan was completed and forwarded to the Regional Office.

#### ***July***

Throughout the WMD, wetlands are receding at a very fast rate. Some WPAs have only minor amounts of water remaining on them. The newly created mud flats will provide ideal sites for noxious weed establishment and we need to monitor these areas closely.

#### ***December***

Spawn reviewed a nine acre WRP intention in Clay County. It was signed for concurrence and sent back to NRCS.

### **3. Forests**

#### ***June***

COE personnel were removing young cottonwood trees from one planting on the Karl E. Mundt NWR during the month. They need the trees for a mitigation mandate and we need the planting thinned. By the end of the month, approximately forty trees had been moved.

#### ***July***

We received the new Regional tree spade from Lacreek NWR. While the new truck is nice because it is new, it, like the truck it replaced lacks the required power for transporting itself and the associated vehicle trailer down the road. We have not yet used the spade portion of

this truck but expect it will operate fine. The lack of power occurs when traveling across country. The lack of power was one of the primary justifications for replacing the old truck and unfortunately, we did not succeed in this area. We are however, thankful to have the tree spade here and will make the best of it.

#### *August*

The fence protecting young hand planted cottonwood trees, was removed and stored for future use. The fence was a huge success resulting in no tree mortality due to white-tailed deer.

### **4. Croplands**

#### *June*

PLS Spawn completed a cooperative farming agreement with Dale Koch, cooperator, for a 45 acre food plot on the Sorenson WPA in Aurora County. The food plot will be seeded to native grass in 2001.

### **5. Grasslands**

#### *February*

PLS Spawn conducted brief habitat surveys of the Humphrey, Stanley, Lutz, White, Overweg, Schute, Krell, Althen, Sorensen, Foster, Crystal Lake, Koch, and Maine WPAs in Aurora County; the Stanek, Pipal, and Koss WPA's in Brule County; and the Diede WPA in Yankton County. Burning or grazing will be utilized on many of the areas in 2000.

#### *May*

Native grass was seeded on the Plucker WPA roundout.

#### *June*

Forty acres of smooth brome is being replanted to native grasses. The process will go like this; spring burn the entire field (40 acres), wait one month for regrowth of brome, spray brome with roundup, seed 20 acres of field to native grasses (June 12th), apply roundup again to 20 acres not seeded, winter, apply roundup again in spring and finally plant the remaining 20 acres to natives. Compare the two seeding methods for success during the following year or two depending upon moisture conditions.

#### *September*

ROS Peterson and PLS Spawn attended the wind power meeting in Aberdeen.

### **7. Grazing**

#### *April*

PLS Spawn completed SUP's for grazing on 5 Aurora County WPA's, Humphrey - 120 acres, Sorensen - 95 acres, Foster - 63 acres, Maine - 105 acres, and Schute - 49 acres.

### ***May***

PLS Spawn monitored grazing on the Schute, Humphrey, Sorensen, Maine, and Foster WPA's, all in Aurora County.

Spawn issued a SUP for grazing a R-O-W which provides access into the Koch WPA in Aurora County. The access road, which is held in fee title by the FWS, is overgrown with vegetation and is in a state of disrepair following the wet conditions throughout the 90's. The grazing will serve to clean up the area prior to reconstruction of the road later this summer.

### ***June***

Grazing permits were issued for the Denning WPA in Douglas County and the Humphrey WPA in Aurora County.

Grazing bills were completed and sent to cooperators for the Schute, Maine, and Sorenson WPA's in Aurora County.

PLS Spawn monitored all grazing units in Aurora County.

PLS Spawn sent a thank-you letter and money order to Dale Peters an adjacent landowner to the Lutz WPA in Aurora County. Dale fixed an area of fence which is FWS responsibility. We will also replace the materials he used.

### ***July***

PLS Spawn completed the bill for grazing on the Foster WPA in Aurora County.

### ***August***

PLS Spawn completed the grazing bill for the Humphrey WPA in Aurora County.

### ***September***

Flood damaged fence was replaced at portions of the Starr WPA in Douglas County.

## **8. Haying**

### ***May***

An SUP was written for the Delger WPA.

### ***July***

Several special use permits for haying were written and sent to WPA cooperators.

## 9. Fire Management

**Prescribed Fire Totals for the Year: 15 Units Burned - 1558 Total Acres**

**Burn Units:**

Lutz WPA - 120 acres  
Peterson WPA - 90 acres  
Lake Andes NWR - 280 acres  
Lake Andes NWR - 40 cares  
Koss WPA - 70 & 60 acres  
Pipal WPA - 60 acres  
Varilek WPA - 220 acres

Koch WPA - 60 acres  
Freese WPA - 8 acres  
Hansen WPA - 67 acres  
Humphrey WPA - 65 acres  
Edelman WPA - 108 acres  
Miller WPA (Turner Co.) - 110 acres  
Heib WPA - 200 acres

### ***February***

PLS Spawn and temporary personnel Jeremy Eldridge and Jacques Duquette mowed firebreaks on the Pipal, Koss, Humphrey, White, Koch, Edelman, Peterson, and Miller WPA's and the Lake Andes NWR. The Huron fire crew will be writing several burn plans for the Lake Andes WMD. The necessary maps and information was sent to assist them.



***Firebreak mowed by the maintenance crew on Owens Bay in preparation of a spring burn.***

ROS Peterson investigated two wild fires within the WMD. The Denning WPA burned completely (160 acre tract) and approximately four acres of the Heib WPA burned. Both WPA's were scheduled for spring 2000 prescribed burning with fall prep work completed for each unit. The Denning started from a burn barrel at an adjoining landowners farm. The Heib fire origin is unknown.



*Possible  
origin of the  
Denning WPA  
wildfire.*



*Adjoining landowner's farmstead*



*A total of 160  
acres of the  
Denning WPA  
burned.*

### ***March***

Field pack tests were completed for PLS Spawn, ROS Peterson, AB Pelizza, Maintenance Worker Eldridge and Bio Tech Duquette.

2109's were submitted to CGS for the purchase of a new fire pumper and truck.

PLS Spawn compiled a list of ambulance services and hospitals, within the WMD, to be used with burn plans and the station safety plan.

PLS Spawn completed burn plans for Owen's Bay Unit 1 - 280 acres, Owen's Bay Unit 2 - 40 acres, and four WPA burns in Aurora County: Humphrey - 65 acres, Stanley - 135 acres, Lutz - 120 acres and Koch - 60 acres.

Shane Del Grosso, prescribed burn specialist at the Huron WMD, completed burn plans for three burn units in Brule County: Koss 1, Koss 2, and Pipal for 190 acres total. Thanks for the assistance Shane!

### ***April***

The Owens Bay, Humphrey, Stanley, Lutz and Koch burn plans were reviewed by RM Pelizza and forwarded to FMO McManus.

The Maintenance crew mowed fire breaks on the Atkins, Miller, Stanley and Lutz WPA's.

Prescribed burns was completed on the Peterson, Freese, Koch, and Hansen WPA's and Owens Bay.

Several burn permits were written for easement lands.

### *May*

A burning ban was in place during April and May in Brule County. We finally obtained special approval from the County Sheriff on May 1 to conduct prescribed burning on Brule County WPA's.

Prescribed burns were completed on the Heib, Lutz, Humphrey, Edleman, Pipal, Varilek and Koss WPA's.

Fifteen prescribed fire units, totaling 1558 acres of uplands, were burned throughout the Wetland District this season. 2000 has been the most active prescribed fire season in the history of the Lake Andes WMD, in terms of number of units burned.

Fire crew support was made available to the Lake Andes WMD through coordination with prescribed fire specialist, Shane Delgrosso, of the Huron fire crew. Crews came from Huron WMD, J. Clark Salyer NWR, Quivera NWR, Flint Hills NWR, Rainwater Basin WMD, and Lacreek NWR. Other than our own staff, 18 individuals assisted with prescribed burning at Lake Andes. The crews contributed a total of 762 hours during the spring prescribed fire season at Lake Andes and served as crew members on 11 of the 15 prescribed burns completed.

### *June*

ROS Peterson completed a fire staffing exercise for the Regional Office.

PLS Spawn looked at the Stanley WPA burn unit in Aurora County. A summer 2000 burn is planned and fuel conditions look favorable for the burn. Spawn and AB Pelizza also obtained baseline vegetative data for the unit.

### *July*

Several WPAs, Freese, Hanson, Edelman, Heib and Miller in Turner County, were inspected for native plant response to spring time prescribed burning. Native grass response has been fantastic in spite of dry conditions. Native grass growth has been so good and harvesting is an option. Needless to say, this station will continue the aggressive use of prescribed burning within the WMD, the result this management tool has on the habitat is simply too good to pass up.

Members of the Huron Fire Crew spent three days cutting and removing burnt cedar trees from a shelter belt tree planting near the maintenance facility. A spring burn killed and partially killed many cedar trees. Since the trees were next to a public road, removing these

dead skeletons will result in a more pleasing view of that portion of the refuge. This work also created openings in the tree planting allowing the public to better view wildlife within the refuge. Two members of the fire crew also worked on post burn monitoring at the Broken Arrow WPA. Four vegetative transects were established prior to the 1,000 acre 1999 summer burn and data was obtained again, one year post burn.

ROS Peterson met with Shane DelGrosso from Huron Fire Crew to discuss future prescribed burning on the Mundt NWR. In addition, Cody Wilson from the COE accompanied us on a Mundt tour and we discussed the potential of the two agencies working together on future prescribed burning. We looked at an area of cedars that were jack potted earlier this year and the setup looks very good for the next south Mundt burn. We cut many cedars at the base of the severely infested south slope. By igniting the jack potted trees at the base and using a heavy up-slope wind, the entire slope can be treated successfully, very quickly.

### *August*

PLS Spawn inspected Koss I and II and Pipal WPA burn units in Brule County. These burn units were mostly native grassland areas which have been severely overtaken by invasive cool season grasses. The response of native plants did not appear very evident at this time. Droughty summer conditions may have had quite an impact on the first season response. Spawn also visited the Hansen and Edelman WPA burn units in Yankton County. These burn units had been cropland and were reseeded to native grasses. The native grass response on these units was excellent! Periodic burning appears to be a pretty good management tool in maintaining seeded native grasses.

Wildfire activity in the western states has reached extreme levels. A plea for any available help has been issued. So far, none of the Lake Andes staff have been assigned to wildfire details.

### *September*

ROS Peterson administered the pack test for two Lacreek NWR employees. The FY01 station fire budget was completed and sent to the RO.

### *October*

Spawn and Peterson identified burn preparation needs for units to be burned in the spring of 2001. Maps were made and sent to the Huron fire crew to begin preparations this fall.

## **10. Pest Control**

### *January*

Five beavers were removed from the Karl Mundt NWR as a result of them killing mature cottonwood trees that bald eagles use for roosting and nesting.

### *February*

ROS Peterson attended a State Weed meeting in Huron on February 24. Jay delivered a synopsis of this year's pest management program.

### *May*

Maintenance was completed on spray equipment and maintenance crews began spraying weed infested WPA's

### *June*

Several noxious weed complaints were logged this month and we have up to five sprayers conducting weed control. The station has three sprayers, we are renting a fourth sprayer and we have hired an aerial applicator for Broken Arrow WPA.

Leafy spurge beetles were released on the Plucker WPA in Turner County. The releases were between the lake and road on the south east side of the WPA. These release sites are areas inaccessible to spraying. We did observe the same spurge beetles in this area from prior years release nearby.

### *July*

Numerous noxious weed complaints were received during the month; some from adjoining landowners and some were from County Weed Supervisors. We provided them with the same old routine of "we are out of chemical and money" to do any more spraying. Some calls were friendly and some were not. We are still mowing down Canada thistle areas and intend on spraying these areas with herbicide later in the fall. We found that our burn areas served as nice "set-ups" for weed control. Burning removed the vegetative canopy, thus allowing for better herbicide contact with the desired weeds when sprayed. All of our WPA burn areas were followed up by herbicide application.



*The Denning WPA burned by a wildfire was aerially sprayed in July.*

### *August*

ROS Peterson invited Jim Stengle to Lake Andes to see our noxious weed infestations. After touring Broken Arrow WPA and three WPA's in Aurora County, Jim was impressed with the severity of our noxious weed problem. He concluded that Aurora County was in worse condition than that of the Broken Arrow WPA.

## **13. WPA Easement Monitoring**

### **A. Wetland Easement**

#### *January*

ROS Peterson and SROS Hicks spent much time during the month working on the many wetland easement violations found during aerial flights. Ground Checks and two contacts were performed with restoration work underway.

A permit for a rock crossing on Lincoln County 14X was issued.

#### *February*

ROS Peterson has been working on various wetland easement cases primarily in Aurora, Brule, and Charles Mix Counties. Each time out in the field it seems new violations are discovered resulting in a backlog for processing previously documented cases. We may be asking for help processing some of our cases since we are understaffed and will have only one LE officer at this station to work cases this year.

#### *April*

Landowner, Dale Koch, requested permission to construct a fence line dike through a protected wetland on Aurora County 50X. PLS Spawn explained that the easement manual makes no provisions for a wetland fill project of that nature.

RM Pelizza met with Alvin Van Zee and Traci Jacobson from the Randall Water District on easements that may be affected by the new water pipeline being installed.

#### *July*

Both PL Pelizza and ROS Peterson spent several hours with a new landowner of Lincoln County 14X. This property, 160 acres has been subdivided and sold to three different landowners. One such landowner knew an easement was on the property when purchased but knew nothing of the terms and conditions. Consequently, he now wants to install developmental type "improvements" to his property that conflict with the easement. He is having a hard time understanding the provisions of the easement and made the offer to sell it back. A congressional inquiry was made by the landowner, but with our good relationships with congressional aides in South Dakota, a quick phone call explaining the situation has this matter resolved for time being.

#### *September*

Several permits to clean out and/or construct dug outs were written for both wetland and grassland easements.

## **B. Grassland Easement**

### ***April***

Spawn surveyed two potential wetland restoration projects in Aurora County on land offered as grassland easement by owner, Bill Folan. One of the ditches is nonfunctional and the other will be plugged prior to realty buying the grassland easement.

### ***June***

PLS Spawn completed an easement permit with Marvin Steele, Aurora County 201G,1 for early haying of a five acre area for noxious weed control.

### ***July***

ROS Peterson conducted grassland easement surveillance flights on July 10<sup>th</sup>. Six possible violations were detected. Ground checks were conducted on July 12<sup>th</sup> that resulted in two early haying violations. Contacts were made the same day. Both violations were first timers and were handled accordingly with the cases closed on July 13<sup>th</sup>. Contacts were made the same day as the ground checks were being conducted due to the fact that the violators were in the field stacking bales.

## **C. FmHA Conservation Easements**

### ***June***

ROS Peterson inspected Douglas County 11C for grazing compliance. No violations were observed.

## **14. Private Lands Initiatives**

### **A. Wetland Restorations and Creations**

#### **WEA's - Wetland Creations 2000:**

<u>County</u>	<u>Number of Created Wetlands</u>	<u>Wetland Acres Created</u>
Charles Mix	4	14.9
Clay	1	4.0
Hutchinson	3	9.5
Tripp	4	20.4
Davison	1	1.7
Total 13 Projects		50.5 Wetland Acres Created

### **WEA's - Wetland Restorations 2000:**

<u>County</u>	<u>Number of Restored Wetlands</u>	<u>Wetland Acres Restored</u>
Hutchinson	21	66.7
Yankton	5	7.2
Charles Mix	1	20.0
<hr/>		
Total	27	93.9
		Wetland Acres Restored

#### ***January***

Four projects were contracted in Tripp County, three dam repairs and one creation. The extension agreement and permits were completed and trickle tubes were delivered to the sites. Construction activities will be delayed until the threat of deep frost is behind us.

#### ***February***

Invoices were sent in for payment for the Vogel creation in Charles Mix County, the Jim Rec Ag creation in Davison County and the Voigt CRP restorations in Bon Homme County.

Four Square Mile ownership verification was returned to the HAPET office.

#### ***March***

PLS Spawn delivered trickle tubes to two wetland developments in Tripp County.

Construction was monitored on three dam repairs in Tripp County.

PLS Spawn met with PFW Archaeologist, Dr. Galen Burgett, to do a ground check on a pond creation site in Tripp County.

#### ***April***

Spawn monitored the construction of a wetland creation in Tripp County.

Three potential project sites were viewed in Charles Mix County. Two projects completed in 1999 were also looked at.

#### ***May***

PLS Spawn met with Hutchinson County District Conservationist, Bob Rennolet, to discuss CRP wetland restoration work to be completed this field season.

Two new creation sites were looked at in Charles Mix County.

### *June*

Four creations and one wetland restoration project were designed in Charles Mix County.

Maps were obtained for all CRP wetland restoration projects to be done in Charles Mix County.

A letter was drafted and sent to all Hutchinson County CRP landowners detailing the process for completing the wetland restoration projects on their CRP lands.

Douglas County CRP wetland restoration projects, completed in 1999, were visited. Most were dry as we are experiencing very dry conditions throughout the district in 2000.

Preliminary surveying was completed on five CRP wetland restorations in Yankton County.

### *July*

One creation project was surveyed in Davison County.

Spawn spoke with both Paul Coughlin, SDGFP, and Rick Warhurst, Ducks Unlimited, concerning project cost-share of various projects across the wetland district.

An agreement and permits were completed for five CRP wetland restoration projects in Yankton County which will result in 7.2 acres of restored wetland.

Several creation and repair sites were looked at in Yankton and Bon Homme Counties. It was explained to the landowners that we do not have any funding in place in either of these counties. Sites are generally looked at, even when we don't have funding, to ensure we don't miss an opportunity on an exceptional project.

### *August*

PLS Spawn met with PFW Archaeologist, Galen Burgett, to conduct site checks for cultural resources on eighteen proposed project areas in Charles Mix, Davison, Hanson, Clay and Hutchinson Counties.

Spawn met with the contractor and monitored project construction of the Pat Cody dam in Clay County. SDGF&P paid for 2/3 of the project cost.

Spawn delivered fence materials to the Jay Cutts creation project in Yankton County and also delivered to the Doug Peterson creation in Charles Mix County.

Spawn spent considerable time designing and surveying projects in Hanson and Hutchinson Counties.

Spawn conducted a tour of projects in Davison and Hanson Counties with contractor Norm Schoenfelder of Mitchell.

WEA's:

Clay County	(1) dam	4.0 Acres
Hutchinson County	(2) dams	8.3 Acres
Hutchinson County	(4) wetland restorations	10.9 Acres
<u>Hutchinson County</u>	<u>(3) wetland restorations</u>	<u>8.4 Acres</u>
4 WEA's	10 projects	31.6 Acres

*September*

The Cody project was inspected in Clay County.

Several CRP wetland restoration projects were surveyed in Hutchinson County.

Trickle tubes were delivered and construction was monitored on three projects in Hutchinson County.

Projects were surveyed and trickle tubes delivered on two projects in Charles Mix County.

Bids were received from contractors for wetland creation projects in Charles Mix County. The contract was awarded to Vander Pol Construction at \$ .80/yd.

WEA's:

Hutchinson Co.	Wetland creation (1)	4.5 Acres
Hanson Co.	Wetland creation (1)	8.9 Acres
Charles Mix Co.	Wetland creation (1)	2.2 Acres
<u>Charles Mix Co.</u>	<u>Wetland creation (1)</u>	<u>5.0 Acres</u>
4 projects		20.6 Acres

*October*

Pre-construction survey work was completed and trickle tubes were delivered for nine wetland creation and repair projects in Charles Mix, Bon Homme, Hanson and Hutchinson Counties. Seven of the projects were constructed and inspected by the end of the month.

Spawn met with contractor, Dale Krandall, at a potential repair site in Hutchinson County.

Five CRP wetland restoration sites were looked at in Charles Mix County.

Construction was monitored and inspected on sixteen CRP wetland restoration projects in Hutchinson County. Invoices were sent to Hutchinson County. FSA, DU, and SDGFP.

WEA's:

Hutchinson Co.	(5) wetland restorations	15.0 Acres
Hutchinson Co.	(3) wetland restorations	5.8 Acres
Hutchinson Co.	(3) wetland restorations	13.1 Acres
Hutchinson Co.	(1) wetland restoration	2.6 Acres
Charles Mix Co.	(1) wetland restoration	20.0 Acres
Charles Mix Co.	(1) dam	2.9 Acres
Charles Mix Co.	(1) dam	4.8 Acres
Bon Homme Co.	(1) dam	5.3 Acres
Davison Co.	(1) dam	1.7 Acres
<u>Hutchinson Co.</u>	<u>(1) dam</u>	<u>7.6 Acres</u>

10 WEA's                      18 projects                      78.8 Acres

***November***

Ol' man winter allowed for the completion of two projects in November before the snow began to fly. By November 7 the construction season was finished! This was by far the earliest wrap-up date since the fall of 1996 when we were shut down in September. Nevertheless, it was a productive construction season.

**B. Upland Habitat Improvement Projects**

***March***

One agreement was written to provide four wood duck boxes to a Gregory County landowner.

***April***

Nesting structure information was sent to Aurora County landowner, Dave Ciani.

**C. General**

***January***

A total of 266 wildlife partners calendars were sent to private landowners, 56 of which were sent to Four Square Mile survey cooperators.

***March***

PLS Spawn attended a SD Partners For Wildlife meeting held in conjunction with the SDTWS annual meetings.

***April***

Spawn completed the Bi-annual Habitat Accomplishment Report and sent it to the Brookings WHO. The new electronic format is very user friendly and requires far less time to complete compared to the old hand-written forms. THANK-YOU to anyone who had input in designing this new format!!

## **15. FACTA/FSA Activities**

### **B. Other**

#### ***January***

ROS Peterson spent a day in Union County with NRCS personnel working on WRP intentions.

## **G. WILDLIFE**

### **2. Endangered and/or Threatened Species**

#### ***January***

Two bald eagle surveys (January 5 and January 25) were completed by ROS Peterson during the month. Ninety-seven and one hundred seven bald eagles were counted respectively during the two surveys. Weather has been unusually mild for the entire winter period thus far and what impact that is having on bald eagle numbers at the Karl Mundt NWR is not known. It appears the number of immature bald eagles is higher than normal for the month of January. One bald eagle nest has been seeing maintenance activity by an adult pair of eagles. The wintering populations will begin departing the area of the Mundt during February.

#### ***February***

ROS Peterson participated in a live radio talk show for bald eagle awareness day on February 4. The host radio station from Yankton, SD did a good job of asking the appropriate questions relative to bald eagles in SD and the Yankton area where nesting eagles have been in the press for many years. Listeners were able to phone in questions and were answered by Peterson.

### **3. Waterfowl**

#### ***February***

Several small flocks of snow geese were observed in the area of Lake Andes NWR. There were no concentrations considered large enough to hunt nor did the few birds that were here stay for any length of time. The Lake Andes area did not contribute to the spring reduction of snow geese in the flyway. Other waterfowl began arriving by late February to the refuge and surrounding wetland complexes. Many brood ponds were open at the end of the month.

#### ***March***

Bio Tech Eldridge maintained the station's wood duck boxes.

#### ***April***

Reminder letters were sent to Four Square Mile landowners who have given us permission to access their land in the past. Those who have denied us access were not corresponded with in any way. Data cards were also ordered from HAPET for the upcoming field season.

#### ***May***

The 1<sup>st</sup> count of the Four Square Mile survey was completed and data cards were sent to the HAPET office.

#### ***June***

The 2<sup>nd</sup> count of the four square mile waterfowl survey was completed. Data cards were sent to the HAPET office.

### ***November***

A waterfowl count was conducted on the Lake Andes Refuge on November 20. A total of 6500 mallards and 300 Canada geese were surveyed.

### ***December***

Waterfowl counts were conducted on Lake Andes on the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup>. Due to the early and total freeze-up of Lake Andes and the prairie ponds, count numbers were unusually low. 75 Canada geese and 20 mallards were counted on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 50 Canada geese and 400 mallards on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **6. Raptors**

### ***December***

Eagle counts were conducted for the normal count area below Ft. Randall Dam. 156 eagles were counted on the 20th and 85 on the 29th.

## **7. Other Migratory Birds**

### ***May***

PLS Spawn and ROS Peterson completed the Dove Coo Counts.

### ***June***

Eastern bluebird nest boxes were checked twice during the month on the Karl E. Mundt NWR. Several nest boxes have had house wrens move in displacing the bluebirds. Wren nests were removed and it will be interesting to see who moves back. All sixteen nest boxes are being used by either eastern bluebirds (9), tree swallows (1) and house wrens (5).

## **8. Game Mammals**

### ***February***

Numerous white-tailed deer have been discovered dead on the Karl Mundt NWR and surrounding private land. The cause of these deaths is unknown at this time with some carcasses being relatively fresh and some older. A very high deer population does exist in this area and perhaps this mortality is normal for the number of animals using the available habitat.

## **10. Other Resident Wildlife**

### ***January***

ROS Peterson reported seeing a bobcat on the north unit of the Karl Mundt NWR.

### ***May***

A special use permit was issued to Dr. David Starkey of the University of California to do genetic research on painted turtles.

AB Pelizza completed the malformed leopard frog survey.



*PLS Spawn found this young short-eared owl on the Maine WPA. He was not camera shy and posed for several photos.*

## 11. Fisheries Resources

### *July*

Dead northern pike were observed in the center lake of Lake Andes during the month. The lake is very green, smelly and its only a matter of time before a significant fish kill occurs throughout the lake.

*Summer fish kill on center unit of Lake Andes*



### **13. Surplus Animal Disposal**

*July*

Four eagles, two golden and two bald, were sent to the eagle repository in Colorado.

### **14. Scientific Collections**

*May*

A special use permit was issued to the University of Manitoba to collect water and algae samples from wetlands for a three year study on the fate of agricultural pesticides in wetlands of the Prairie Pothole Region.

### **16. Marking and Banding**

*January*

AB Pelizza, PLS Spawn and ROS Peterson traveled to Lacreek NWR to assist with Canada goose banding. The trip was a bust with only one goose being banded and released.

*July*

ROS Peterson began preparing for fall waterfowl banding. Due to low water conditions, banding sites will have to be modified or even moved. At the present time, our best site on private land is useless due to the shallow wetland being nearly dry.

*August*

Personnel continued to band ducks during the month with average success.

*September*

ROS Peterson spent considerable time conducting waterfowl banding for the Complex. Numerous volunteers were used to help with the overall banding effort.

### **17. Disease Prevention and Control**

*July*

Botulism checks were conducted near the Trout WPA in Charles Mix County. Reports of dead ducks prompted the search. Only three dead blue-winged teal were located. It appears these ducks died from something other than botulism.

## **H. PUBLIC USE**

### **1. General**

#### ***March***

PLS Spawn assisted with the Water Festival held in Sioux Falls, March 21-22. Staff from Madison WMD, Brookings WHO, and Lake Andes Complex provided a booth in the exhibit hall and a classroom demonstration for hundreds of area 4<sup>th</sup> graders.

RM Pelizza conducted an endangered species program on March 6th for twenty Wagner Girl Scouts.

#### ***April***

PL Pelizza attended a Becoming An Outdoors Woman Workshop meeting in Mitchell on April 26th.

#### ***May***

A news release on the Refuge's annual Kid's Fishing Derby was written.

#### ***June***

The annual Kid's Fishing Derby was once again very successful with a total of 72 participants. Both the boy and girl with the largest fish received a grand prize. Prizes included: First place - bicycle; Second place - \$25 Scheel's gift certificate; Third place - \$20 Schwan's gift certificate. Miscellaneous small prizes were given to the remainder of the group.

Two Roster Clinics were held this month; one at Yankton and one at Lacreek. Refuge staff assisted Tom Roster with these clinics.

#### ***October***

PL Pelizza presented a program for thirty Girl Scouts from Lake Andes on October 17th. The program and trail hike will assist them in achieving their wildlife badge.

### **2. Outdoor Classrooms - Students**

#### ***April***

Available staff conducted an environmental education program and refuge tour to 80+ 2<sup>nd</sup> graders from the Wagner School.

#### ***May***

Platte Elementary toured the Refuge on May 4. The teachers were comfortable enough to guide themselves.

PL Pelizza presented a short talk on the Refuge and NWRS to two fourth grade classes from Armour on May 12.

## **6. Interpretive Exhibits/Demonstrations**

### ***January***

Refuge personnel staffed on exhibit at the Charles Mix County Mid-Winter Fair located in Geddes, SD, on January 26 and 27. We provided an eye-catching booth that attracted many fair-goers. Overall, the turn-out for this event was very low.

## **7. Other Interpretive Programs**

### ***July***

ROS Peterson attended a Missouri River float trip tour to look at the effects of stream bank erosion that is occurring below the Fort Randall Dam. The Lewis & Clark South Dakota-Nebraska Preservation Association sponsored the trip. Approximately forty people attended including aides from all the three congressional offices in South Dakota, county commissioners, COE, FWS, NRCS employees and some private landowners. Areas of severe bank erosion were observed including many mature cottonwood trees that have recently toppled into the Missouri River. Ten bald eagles, numerous least terns and a few piping plovers were observed along the trip. Several stops were made along the way and many questions pertained to bald eagles and their habitat requirements. The Niobrara River delta was looked over and discussions were made as to the heavy build-up of sediment in the Missouri River. Additional meetings regarding the River and this topic are scheduled for next month.

## **9. Fishing**

### ***January***

Perch fishing on Lake Andes has been pretty good this winter. Bite activity has been slow and unpredictable, but some very nice fish are being taken at various locations on both the south and middle units. Average water depth is about 5 feet.

### ***February***

Perch fishing is good. A few nice (4-10 lb) northern pike are being caught off shore in the Lakeside Park area right near the town of Lake Andes. The short ice-fishing season we had is over and the ice is out!

### ***March***

Perch fishing in Lakefront Park near the town of Lake Andes has been fantastic! At times, twenty or more boats could be seen packed in the bay near Highway 281. It has also been difficult to find a piece of shoreline to fish from on the weekends. Limits of 8-12" fish were fairly common, but an angler would probably catch and release 100 small fish, 5-8", in the process. Water clarity is decent so far this spring with the limited runoff.

### ***December***

Lake Andes was covered with 20" of good ice by the end of the month. Fisherman were showing up in good numbers and were driving all over Johnson's Bay in search of trophy yellow perch. Reports were good, although action was reportedly hit and miss. Limits were hard to come by, but the fish being caught were of quality size. Fish in the 11-12" range were common with some 13-14" fish being taken. On a busy weekend day, around 70-80 vehicles could be seen on Johnson's Bay.

## **10. Trapping**

### ***January***

ROS Peterson completed a FOIA request for trapping information.

### ***February***

ROS Peterson completed a FOI trapping survey and submitted information to the RO.

## **11. Wildlife Observation**

### ***March***

ROS Peterson completed the SD Ornithological Bird Report.

### ***July***

ROS Peterson met with Cody Wilson, Lake Manager for the Fort Randall Dam Project at Pickstown to discuss improvements to the bald eagle observation area located on COE lands. We came up with a plan to move a gazebo type kiosk to the observation area, install benches, provide coinless observation binoculars, and re-structure their existing parking area. Additional Karl Mundt NWR interpretive panels, Lewis and Clark interpretive panels and other Corps of Engineers panels will be installed on the new gazebo.

## **17. Law Enforcement**

### ***January***

A situation began in November 1999 regarding an adjacent landowner to the south unit of Lake Andes. This section of the lake is closed to public hunting. A finger of this meandered lake extends into the landowner's property where he placed a hunting blind. ROS Hicks placed a boundary marker close to the blind to let him know he could not hunt over the water because it was a national wildlife refuge. This sparked a disagreement as to where the refuge boundary really existed.

To date we have had several pieces of correspondence with Mr. Brooks' attorney and meetings with Mr. Brooks, his brother, and the local County Commissioner. All are questioning our right to enforce the refuge boundary. The water rights issue regarding a meandered lake bed has been hard for Mr. Brooks to accept.

This lead RM Pelizza to suggest that Mr. Brooks contact the Attorney General's Office for information on the subject. Unfortunately, the Attorney General's Office is now saying that the State of South Dakota never had the right to give the USFWS an easement on the lake in the first place.

On January 11, Margo Zallen from the Solicitor's Office in Denver telephoned to get some insight on the problem. Although, in order for their office to work on the situation a formal request would have to be written.

RM John Koerner was contacted on January 12 to discuss water rights issues. We agree, as well as other persons in the USFWS, that Mr. Brooks does not have a legitimate argue.

SRA Prieksat and SD Supervisor Wright were informed of the situation.

### ***February***

The annual law enforcement/incident report was completed and forwarded to LE Coordinator Storey.

RM Pelizza met with Bob and Wayne Brooks about the refuge boundary situation/near their property. It was explained that we would still enforce the refuge boundary to the high water mark of the lake until someone above told us not to. Another letter from their attorney was received on February 22. They continue to ask what authority we have to enforce this issue. SRA Prieksat was contacted and a meeting set with him during the first week in March.

RM Pelizza and ROS Peterson both attended LE training in Marana, AZ.

ROS Peterson met the new Charles Mix County Conservation Officer Tim Flor. Tim had many questions relative to the Service's presence in the County and how we operated our Law Enforcement Program. One of the questions he asked was whether or not he could call upon us for backup for any incidents where he felt he needed backup. The response was yes especially since ROS Peterson has state credentials.

### ***March***

RM Pelizza was interviewed by Rod Green, Background Investigator regarding Natoma Buskness' employment at Lake Andes.

### ***April***

SRA Bob Prieksat visited the office to discuss the Bob Brooks case. PL Pelizza and SRA Prieksat also conducted a site visit.

### ***July***

A trespass grazing complaint was investigated on the Trout WPA. It appears the neighbors cattle had been in the WPA for a very short period of time prior to the investigation. Very little vegetation consumption had taken place prior to their removal. Since no cattle were observed on the WPA during the investigation, no further contacts with the owners of cattle were conducted.

### ***August***

Officers Pelizza and Peterson completed the annual fall refresher in Huron on August 29.

### ***November***

With no one living on the Karl Mundt NWR any longer, there have been several reports of trespass and unauthorized deer hunting. Local CO Tim Flor has been trying to keep a watchful eye on the Refuge for us.

## **I. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES**

### **1. New Construction**

#### ***January***

Wagner Building Supply repaired the new overhead door on the addition to the maintenance building. The east door had pulled away from the wall in December. Punch items from the final inspection are still being worked on. The major item is replacing the key cores on the entrance doors.

#### ***February***

RM Pelizza discussed the maintenance addition punch list with George Newland in Engineering. WBS has requested final payment, but will not receive all of it at this time.

#### ***March***

PLS Spawn did an excellent job of refinishing a set of map cabinets desperately needed for the office.

Maintenance Workers Eldridge and Slaba installed the new tank on the mezzanine in the new shop addition.

Preparations for the parking lot rehabilitation were started with the removal of several trees and the sidewalk. The grassy area was cut and disced.

#### ***July***

Work began on development and construction of a new parking area for the office and public use area. The old kiosk that was stationed near the office was moved to the trail head of the walking trail. A new concrete base was constructed for the kiosk and it is being painted and cleaned up. We have a person providing community service work for us and this person is maintaining the walking trail for us on weekends. The new parking area will be graveled and have a visitor side and a staff side. A sidewalk will be constructed on the visitor side leading to the kiosk and office.



***The old kiosk is moved across the road to the day use area. It is refurbished and placed at the start of the walking trail.***



*The parking lot was enlarged, graded, graveled and a new split rail fence was installed by the maintenance crew.*



*A concrete pad for the new kiosk and the sidewalk were poured.*



*The talented maintenance crew constructed the new kiosk. New interpretive signs were installed as well as an outdoor brochure rack and bulletin boards.*

## **2. Rehabilitation**

### ***January***

Construction of two rooms in the basement of the Mundt quarters began. The two rooms will provide an additional bedroom and a family room. A bathroom will also be installed.

### ***February***

Work continues on the basement at the Mundt quarters.

### ***July***

The Lake Andes quarters was shingled this month as part of the flood project dollars received.

## **3. Major Maintenance**

### ***March***

Gravel was spread on the Owens Bay dike and pond roads by Maintenance Worker Eldridge.

### ***May***

Fencing by the maintenance crew continues on Broken Arrow, Lutz, Delger, Maine and Denning WPA's.

#### **4. Equipment Utilization and Replacement**

*August*

SDGFP personnel at Chamberlain borrowed the air boat for botulism work.

#### **5. Communications Systems**

*January*

B & L Communications completed a check and repair of radios in all vehicles.

#### **8. Other**

*March*

The fence and gate to the environmental education area were renovated to make it possible to close the area after hours.

## **J. Other Items**

Compiling of narratives at this refuge was discontinued for lack of time and personnel from the years of 1993 to 2001. In 2002, a memo from the Acting Chief of Operations requested each Project Leader to begin to catch up on their Annual Narrative Reports. Almost all of the personnel from that time period have transferred to other stations. As a result, this Administrative Support Assistant and Private Lands Biologist Steve Spawn (two of the remaining constants at this station) are doing our best to compile these narratives in a new format from the monthly activity reports, RCAR reports, budget records, prescribed burns reports, photos and any other information we can decipher to produce an acceptable document. We hope we have accomplished that feat.